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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 002585

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2015

TAGS: [REF](#) [PHUM](#) [GH](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES POLICE ABUSES AND CORRUPTION
DURING INITIAL CALL ON THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR

REF: A) ACCRA 2548 B) YAOUNDE 2288

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PAMELA BRIDGEWATER FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)
)

11. SUMMARY: (C) The Ambassador raised the issue of police beatings at Krisan Refugee Camp during her meeting with the Minister of the Interior on December 16. The Minister indicated a willingness to investigate our findings and expressed indignation that UNHCR had not kept him informed. The Minister seemed aware of the recently released Transparency International report, placing Ghana's police as among the world's most corrupt. He said he would emphasize human rights issues in police training, and welcomed USG aid to carry out further institutional reforms. The meeting ended on a cordial note, with both parties apologizing for the mix-up that led to Refugee Coordinators' unauthorized visit to Krisan Camp on December 8 (ref A) and to their subsequent one-hour detention. End Summary.

Mending Fences

12. (SBU) The Ambassador opened the discussion by thanking the Government of Ghana (GOG) for all the assistance it has offered refugees since 1990 and apologized for our unauthorized visit to Krisan Refugee Camp one week earlier. The Minister quickly apologized for the GOG's violation of the Vienna Convention when it detained three U.S. diplomats for an hour. He explained that he needed to approve all visits to both Krisan and Budumburam Camps to ensure our safety and security. He had already identified 47 refugees from Krisan Camp who were implicated in criminal behavior, and offered to send us the full list, complete with photos. The Ambassador said that upon receipt of this information, we would cease all contact with these refugees.

Police Corruption - As Bad as Nigeria?

13. (SBU) The Ambassador mentioned the recently released Transparency International report on police corruption, ranking Ghana along with six other nations (including Nigeria and Cameroon) as the world's worst (ref B). The Minister did not act surprised. In order to combat corruption, he said he had sent publicity to all police stations, advising the public that cash payments to the police were not allowed. The Minister said he would change the content of the police training program to include greater emphasis on human rights and integrity. In fact, he was implementing a policy that could also hold a supervisor responsible for the negligent behavior of a subordinate officer in cases where oversight had been inadequate. The Minister was grateful for the previous ICITAP training to welcome more USG assistance to carry out institutional reforms. The Minister went so far as to request that a U.S. law enforcement officer be permanently assigned to our Mission in Accra. Noting the upcoming USG-sponsored police training in February, the Ambassador asked the Minister to send us his ideas on what he would like to emphasize during the course.

Police Abuse, Resettlement, and UNHCR

14. (SBU) Ref Coord mentioned his observations that the response to the refugees' misconduct at Krisan appeared to have been disproportionate. Although refugee accounts were subject to dispute, there was documentation in file for 100 refugees who had been treated for injuries following the police intervention on November 8. The Minister wondered why UNHCR hadn't spoken to him since UNHCR is responsible for ensuring the protection of refugees. Ref Coord advised that Acting Representative Luc Stevens was aware of the excesses but had chosen not to say anything to the GOG for fear of triggering a backlash. The Minister appeared to be genuinely concerned over these allegations, adding that he would investigate.

15. (SBU) The Ambassador mentioned that the Sudanese still believe they are going to be resettled next month, but UNHCR had not taken any concrete steps to refer them to a third country. The Minister appeared surprised and indignant,

threatening to convoke UNHCR for a meeting; the Ambassador suggested a tripartite meeting in January involving the U.S. Embassy since we were also unhappy with the pace of resettlement and shared his concerns over the possibility of violence in the future at Krisan.

Comment

16. (C) The meeting remained cordial throughout and the drama over our visit to Krisan appears to have ended amicably, perhaps even setting the stage for a closer working relationship with the Minister. We suspect that the Minister feigned ignorance of the police beatings since it is difficult to believe that no one informed the Ministry of the police's behavior. Whether due to political expediency or sheer timidity, in this instance UNHCR simply forfeited its mandate to ensure the protection of the Krisan refugees. Furthermore, we are disturbed to learn that UNHCR officials have been withholding important information from both the GOG and from refugees hoping for resettlement. We will work together with UNHCR and refugees to avoid misunderstandings in the future. End Comment.

BRIDGEWATER